

## Putting the Freeze on Your Knee Pain

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE SUFFER FROM SOME TYPE OF KNEE RELATED PAIN. WHETHER IT IS ARTHRITIS, MENISCUS TEARS, LIGAMENT INJURIES, CONTUSIONS, INSTABILITY, TENDONITIS OR OVERUSE, THE TREATMENT PATTERN IS OFTEN SIMILAR. REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION, REDUCING INFLAMMATION IS PARAMOUNT TO RESOLVING PAIN.

MOST PEOPLE KNOW TO USE THE ACRONYM R.I.C.E. (REST, ICE, COMPRESSION AND ELEVATION) WHEN THEY EXPERIENCE AN ACUTE INJURY. WHILE REST SEEMS FAIRLY OBVIOUS, MANY PEOPLE FORGO ICE AFTER THE FIRST DAY OR SO. THIS IS A BIG MISTAKE. I GENERALLY RECOMMEND ICE FOR PROLONGED PERIODS OF TIME AS I FIND IT EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING CHRONIC PAIN RELATED TO ARTHRITIS AS WELL AS MORE ACUTE INJURIES.

YOUR KNEES WILL ULTIMATELY TELL YOU WHEN TO ICE. SWELLING IS MOST COMMON INSIDE THE KNEE JOINT ITSELF AS WELL AS AROUND THE KNEECAP. IN SOME CASES, THE SWELLING WILL TRAVEL DOWN THE LEG AND INTO THE FOOT AND ANKLE AS WELL SINCE GRAVITY TENDS TO PULL IT THERE WHEN YOU SIT OR STAND FOR PROLONGED PERIODS. THIS IS WHERE THE ELEVATION PART BECOMES NECESSARY IF YOU ARE LIMITED WITH WEIGHT BEARING OR UNABLE TO WALK BASED ON PAIN OR THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS.

ASIDE FROM JUST ICING, USING A COLD PACK OR WRAP THAT PROVIDES COMPRESSION IS ALSO BENEFICIAL IN ACCELERATING THE REDUCTION OF SWELLING AND FLUID ON THE KNEE. APPLYING A COLD WRAP IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXERCISE OR AFTER A PERIOD OF INCREASED ACTIVITY WILL REDUCE POST ACTIVITY SORENESS AND SWELLING. I RECOMMEND APPLYING THE ICE TREATMENT FOR 15-20 MINUTES AND THEN REMOVING FOR ONE HOUR BEFORE REPEATING AS NEEDED.

AS PAIN AND SWELLING SUBSIDE, IT BECOMES EASIER TO RESTORE RANGE OF MOTION AND STRENGTH WITH A PROPERLY DIRECTED EXERCISE PROGRAM. USING APPROPRIATE QUADRICEPS, HAMSTRINGS AND HIP EXERCISES WILL ELIMINATE MUSCLE IMBALANCES AND RESTORE FUNCTION. TYPICAL KNEE REHAB PROGRAMS LAST ANYWHERE FROM 4-8 WEEKS FOR NON-OPERATIVE CONDITIONS AND FROM 1 TO 6 MONTHS FOR MOST POST-OPERATIVE CONDITIONS.

THE MAXIMUM PROTECTION PHASE FOR HEALING TISSUE RANGES BETWEEN 3 DAYS AND 6 WEEKS DEPENDING UPON THE INJURY IN THE KNEE. DURING THIS PHASE, ICING THE KNEE ROUTINELY IS CRITICAL FOR CONTROLLING PAIN AND INFLAMMATION. TOO MUCH SWELLING WILL INHIBIT THE QUADRICEPS MUSCLE THEREBY REDUCING STRENGTH AND MOBILITY, WHILE ALSO MAKING WALKING MORE PAINFUL AND DIFFICULT.

SO, IF YOU ARE PLAGUED BY CHRONIC KNEE PAIN OR HAVE RECENTLY SUFFERED A KNEE INJURY, BEGIN MAXIMIZING YOUR HEALTH AND RECOVERY BY USING COLD THERAPY. INVEST IN A GOOD COLD COMPRESSION WRAP TODAY, AVOID ABUSIVE STRESS ON THE KNEE JOINT, AND CONSULT A QUALIFIED MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL TO ADVISE YOU ON SAFE AND EFFECTIVE KNEE REHAB EXERCISES.

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